



**Inspiring all girls to be
strong, smart, and bold SM**

**Girls Incorporated[®]
of Durham**

Family Handbook



www.girlsinc-durham.org

905-428-8111 ext 22



GIRLS INCORPORATED® OF DURHAM

Vision

Empowered girls and an equitable society

Girls Incorporated® of Durham

Empowers girls to believe in themselves and reach their full potential. We inspire all girls to be Strong, Smart, and Bold through advocacy, education, and programs.



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Important Program Policies

1. Health and Safety Policy

The health and safety of program participants, volunteers and staff is of primary importance in all of Girls Incorporated® of Durham programs and upheld by the health & safety policy adopted Feb 26, 2010. Every effort will be made to ensure that all activities within programs and facilities are safe and secure, both physically and emotionally, thus promoting an environment in which all program participants, volunteers and staff feel comfortable for optimal learning and enjoyment.

1.1 CPR and First Aid

There will always be at least one adult (staff/volunteer) on-site with current CPR and First Aid Certification. Re-certification is required bi-annually.

1.2 Criminal Reference Clearance

All Staff and Volunteers must obtain criminal reference clearance, conducted by Durham Regional Police Services prior to any interaction with program participants.

1.3 Current Medical and Emergency Information

1. Current medical and emergency information of all program participants will be on-site at all program locations. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that this information is correct.
2. Under no circumstances is staff or volunteers allowed to administer medications; for participants requiring medications but not old enough to administer their own (as identified by parent), parent/guardians must ensure medications are administered prior to program or event.
3. If a child is to take medication while in the program, the parent/guardian must provide written authorization. If it is a prescription medication, it must be in its original container. The container must specify the recipient, dosage and schedule. A record will be kept of all medication taken.



Important Program Policies

1.4 Emergency Procedures at Program Location: Off Site Programs

1. As Girls Incorporated® of Durham primarily conducts programs utilizing community locations each program emergency plan will abide by the location specifications. However, all program participants, volunteers and staff will be made aware of emergency exits and all program participants will discuss with staff/volunteer an emergency plan that is specific to the location in which the program is being offered.
2. In the event of a medical emergency or accident on an outing, the Volunteer should make every effort to inform the parent or guardian as quickly as possible. If the Member is injured or unwell while in the Volunteer's care, medical attention should be sought. Under no circumstances should the volunteer administer medicine (including aspirin) to the Member.

1.5 On Site Emergency Procedures

In the event of fire or for any evacuation purposes everyone shall remain calm and follow the procedures posted in the Program Room, front entrance and listed here:

- a) Proceed to the nearest office exit. Two doors, one back door on the south side of building, one front door in the Program Room.
- b) When you leave the building proceed to the sidewalk in front of the building and go as far from the building as possible.

There is a fire extinguisher at the back Exit Door and one at the front Exit Door in the Girls Inc. program room.

1.6 Outings

While on a Girls Incorporated outing, staff will have with them all emergency information pertaining to the participants attending. The information will include but is not limited to: home and emergency phone numbers, list of allergies and medications and Ontario Health card numbers. In the event of an emergency the participant's needs will be met first and the parent/guardian will be notified immediately.



Important Program Policies

2. Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying behavior will not be tolerated at any Girls Incorporated® of Durham program. In-keeping with Health and Safety Policies, it is the intention of Girls Incorporated to ensure that all program participants, volunteers and staff feel safe and secure in the learning environment. The topic of bullying and other behavioural expectations will be discussed as a group on the first day of every program.

Should a problem with bullying behaviour present itself Girls Incorporated® will undertake the following necessary steps to resolve the issue:

1. The program participant initiating the bullying behavior will be privately spoken to and will be made aware of the consequences of persistent undesirable behavior. Every effort will be undertaken to work positively, constructively, and in a non-judgmental manner with the program participant to alleviate the undesirable behaviour.
2. If the undesirable behaviour persists, parents/guardians will be contacted and a meeting will be arranged between the staff, parent/guardian and the program participant. Strategies for overcoming the behavior will be discussed. The program participant and parent/guardian will be made aware of the consequence of persistent undesirable behaviour.
3. If the undesirable behaviour persists, and, **only** as a last resort, when the above strategies have been exhausted, the program participant will be removed from the program.
4. Fee re-payment in its entirety or any part thereof, may or may not be issued in the result of a removal from the program. See Fee Refund Policy 3.3 for details.



Program Policies

3. Program Fee Policy

Fees requested for programs are used to assist Girls Incorporated® of Durham in covering costs associated with supplies used by participants in the programs.

3.1 Fee Refund Policy

If a program should be cancelled due to low registration *before* the scheduled start date a full refund will be issued.

If a participant is removed from a program, a partial fee refund may be available depending upon the circumstances and remaining time left in the program.

Refunds will *not* be issued in the event of program cancellations due to inclement weather. As well, refunds will *not* be issued in the event of missed programs due to illness, or absenteeism.

3.2 Fee Assistance Policy

Financial assistance may be available to those who qualify. Please speak to a staff member to discuss options. All information will be kept confidential.





Important Program Policies

4. Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policy

Parents/Guardians are expected to come into the building to sign in their child before leaving.

As a safety precaution, we do NOT allow children to wait outside unattended for their parent/guardian to arrive. Therefore, it is necessary for the parent/guardian to come into the building to pick up their child. In addition, we require all release parents/guardians to sign the child out before they leave the program.

Children will only be released to the individual as stated by the drop off parent/guardian. Please call us or send us a note in advance if someone else will be picking up the child you bring to programming. If we do not receive notice, the child will not be permitted to leave Girls Inc. until a parent/guardian is contacted.

4.1 Late Pick-Up Policy

It is the expectation that parents/guardians will arrive on-time to pick-up program participants. Girls Incorporated® of Durham reserves the right to charge the parent/guardian a late pick-up fee.

The late fee shall be applied as follows:

A charge of \$1/minute per child for every minute late.

In the event that a program participant is not picked up by a parent/guardian or appointed responsible individual, Girls Incorporated® of Durham staff/volunteer will *never* leave a program participant unattended. If an inordinate amount of time passes with no communication from the parent/guardian or appointed responsible individual, Girls Incorporated® of Durham staff/volunteer will have no choice but to contact the appropriate authorities; the Children's Aid Society or the Durham Regional Police.



Important Program Policies

5. Program Cancellation Policy

Girls Incorporated® of Durham reserves the right to modify or cancel programs due to low registration. Fee refunds will be issued in accordance with Fee Refund Policy 3.1

Programs may also be cancelled due to inclement weather. Every effort will be made to notify program participants of the cancellation. It is best to exercise your own judgment as to safety issues while driving in the event of inclement weather. Fee refunds for missed program days in the event of inclement weather will not be issued. See Fee Refund Policy 3.3 for details.

Program Expectations

1. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Please encourage your child to participate in activities, to try new things, and to make new friends. Review the program expectations with her and help us reinforce the importance of respecting herself, others, and property.

Stay in touch with what your child is doing during her time at Girls Inc. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to talk to a staff member. You can speak with her when you pick your child up from programming or call the office during regular business hours to speak with someone over the telephone.

2. Announcements

Special announcements and information will be posted at the programming site. The monthly calendar will also inform parents/guardians of important information and special events. Letters or flyers will be passed out during pick up time if there is new information. Please check these locations regularly.



Program Expectations

3. Tidying Up

Girls are expected to help clean up the site as needed. Tasks may include cleaning up after snack, lunch, or activities, sweeping etc. Please encourage your daughter to take pride in the appearance of our Girls Inc site and to pick up after herself.

4. Appropriate Attire

Many of the Girls Incorporated® of Durham programs require activity and movement, therefore program participants should be dressed comfortably and running shoes should be worn.

As well, dressing according to the weather is also advised.

5. Food and Snacks

Every effort is made to ensure that any food or snack items served at Girls Incorporated® of Durham programs or group events are **peanut/nut-free**. We can not ensure that all facilities used for the purposes of operating programs are peanut/nut-free environments.

As per Health and Safety Policy 1.3: Current Medical and Emergency Information, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to inform Girls Incorporated® of Durham of pre-existing medical conditions including food-related allergies and that this information will be on-site with the staff/volunteer.

Please ensure that participants in evening programs eat prior to attending. Generally, food is not to be brought to the program unless requested in advance by program staff.



Program Expectations

6. Money and Valuables

It is advisable that the girls do not bring money or valuables to the program. We recommend that girls leave their cell phones at home. However, if parents/guardians allow their child to bring these items to Girls Inc. we ask that they are left in their bag. If this rule is not followed Girls Inc. reserves the right to remove the item and return it at pickup time.

Girls Incorporated® of Durham will not assume responsibility for lost or stolen items.

Any money over and above the registration fee that is required for the program or activity will be requested, in advance, by staff running the program.





General Program Information

1. Characteristics of Girls Incorporated® Programs

We are pleased that you have chosen Girls Incorporated® of Durham for programs for your daughter(s). All of our programs are informal educational researched-based programs that are specifically designed for girls. Our programs address needs specific to girls and women with the goal of preparing girls and young women for confident, independent, and responsible adulthood. Generally, we operate programs with a ratio of 1 adult to 6 participants. The following is a condensed list of some of the characteristics you will find of all of our programs.

Innovative: Programs provide girls and young women with unique, non-traditional learning opportunities.

Active: At Girls Inc. we promote learning by doing. Our programs engage girls and young women and encourage them to participate.

Age-Appropriate: Program objectives and methods are tailored to address the specific needs of the age group being served.

Challenging: Our programming enables girls to experience sports and other physical activities, involves them in science, math, and technology projects and introduces them wherever possible to non-traditional career options.

Inclusive: All programs serve girls and young women from diverse backgrounds with varying abilities in an integrated way.

Affirming: Staff and volunteers actively promote the development of a positive self-concept in each girl and young woman.



Policy on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination

Girls Incorporated is committed to diversity in principle and practice. Our programs are open to all girls. Our commitment is founded in our communal sense of justice and gives expression to our belief that the world and our organization are nourished and enriched by the diversity of our cultures and experiences. We strive toward a world of understanding and mutual support.

We recognize and attempt to bridge the growing gulf in our society between rich and poor, privileged and neglected. Working with girls and young women, we also endeavor to eliminate sexism, racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination.

We celebrate the similarities and differences among girls and embrace girls of every background and ability. We believe that girls are sisters: discrimination targeted toward some girls not only hinders their achievement but diminishes the strength of sisterhood for all.





Girls Inc. Girls' Bill of RightsSM

Girls have the right to **be themselves** and to **resist gender stereotypes**.

Girls have the right to **express themselves** with **originality and enthusiasm**.

Girls have the right to **take risks**, to **strive freely**, and to **take pride in success**.

Girls have the right to **accept** and **appreciate** their bodies.

Girls have the right to have **confidence** in themselves and to be **safe in the world**.

Girls have the right to prepare for **interesting work** and **economic independence**.